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Rivers of the World: The Danube

Port Arthur Transfer Recalls Famous Siege

Gibbon Greets Long-Lost Friends in Washington

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New Red Sea Port to Open Yemen Trade Portals

"It's Bimbo!" Cried Roberta—The soulful gaze she remembered so well at parting in Thailand suddenly greeted her half a world away in Washington, D. C. You will see the joyful reunion on pages 114-115.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER VOLKMAR WENTZEL

tion. Russians allow ships to go from Yugoslavia through Austria into Western Germany, and Ruhr coal again floats down to Belgrade. Fertilizers, oil, and iron pyrites go up to Regensburg; an estimated million tons of Austrian oil annually pass through Yugoslavia to Russia.

Russian control of the Danube's many mouths seals off the entire river from the free world's trade.

Meanwhile, our nonpolitical twig is well started on its unhampered journey. To Ulm it dances in a toy stream amid sailboats and foldboats. Dams for sawmills and paper mills briefly interrupt its trip. At Regensburg the river assumes a more businesslike air, though nothing compared with its prewar glory. In those days cargoes from all Europe moved between Regensburg and the Black Sea. A million travelers annually sailed the river in luxurious floating hotels, thrilled by castles of medieval robber barons and by the glitter of Vienna with its lilting waltz refrains.

Below Vienna the Danube divides Czechoslovakia and Hungary. It sweeps past villages where church spires pierce woodlands above clusters of whitewashed houses. A right-angle turn sends it south to bisect Budapest.

Over the great Plain of Hungary seagulls and cranes wheel and swoop above lush farmlands where wheat gleams gold in the sun. Magyar herdsmen in shaggy sheepskin robes tend wide-horned cattle. Summer and winter they cling to this costume, maintaining that "it keeps off the heat" in one season and "it shuts out the cold" in the other.

Belgrade's once-Oriental appearance has almost vanished with time and the damage wrought during World War II. Big apartment houses rise in residential developments, office buildings tower more than a dozen stories along widened streets. But baggy white trousers, astrakhan caps, and sandals with turned-up toes show that "costumes have not yet been dis-

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Aggstein Castle Guards the Danube at Wachau Gorge above Vienna—Near-by Dürnstein, another robber-baron relic, held Richard the Lionheart on his return from the Crusades.

Rivers of the World, No. 4

The Danube: Roadblocked "Highway of Races"

A breeze stirs among the dark sprucebrakes of southern Germany. A twig breaks off, falls into an infant stream, and floats free. The journey thus begun in the Black Forest will, if all goes well, end 1,725 miles away in the Black Sea. For the stream the twig took passage with is "the beautiful blue Danube," Europe's second-longest river.

The twig's voyage is one that cannot today be duplicated by any man-bearing vessel. Not that the Danube is too tumultuous. Foldboats easily maneuver the upper reaches and mountain vigor soon succumbs to somnolent plains. Heavy shipping can operate from Regensburg to the mouth.

Why, then, does it not? Because man has built roadblocks on the "Highway of Races" in the form of national boundaries. The Danube flows through, or bounds, eight countries: Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia. Each adds its bit to make this one-time busy street through Europe a series of dead ends. Greatest barrier of all is the Iron Curtain which separates Germany and the western zones of Austria from Russia and its satellites.

Yugoslavia broke away from the rest of the communist world in 1948. Its 236-mile stretch of the Danube slashes the Russian-controlled sections in two. The canal bypassing the Iron Gate is entirely within Yugoslavia.

These geographic advantages place the Yugoslavs in a bargaining posi-

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Port Arthur Transfer Recalls Famous Siege

Russians, abandoning Port Arthur to their Chinese allies next June, look back over their shoulders at the scene of a crushing defeat.

There on Manchuria's southern tip, Japanese forces in 1904 smashed the Czar's forts and Pacific fleet in one of the most ghastly siege actions of modern times.

Among rugged hills that shield the port on three sides sappers burrowed and fought beneath the earth like enraged moles. Ropes girdled their waists so patrol mates could haul back their bodies if enemy tunnelers ambushed them in the dank darkness. Men fought and died in brutal cold. Disease slaughtered thousands. The fighting raged almost a year. The Japanese suffered 58,000 battle casualties. The Russians lost 15,000 in dead alone.

Where mountain-ribbed Liaotung Peninsula tapers to a point, in the latitude of Lisbon and Washington, D. C., Port Arthur boasts a magnificent natural harbor with an entrance only 300 yards wide. Because the harbor is ice-free the year round, Chinese Manchu emperors began in the mid-19th century to convert the fishing village there into a naval station called Lüshunkow. British occupying forces in 1860 named it Port Arthur.

Realizing that Port Arthur–based warships could control the Yellow Sea, Japan captured the city in 1894, during the first Sino-Japanese War. European pressure soon forced its return, and Russia, growing strong in the Far East, leased the Manchurian city from China.

Gibraltar of the Pacific—From 1898 until Japan returned with troops and warships in 1904 the Russians turned Port Arthur into a "Gibraltar of the Pacific," bristling with guns and soon to be connected via the new Trans-Siberian Railway with Moscow and the czarist capital of St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), some 5,000 miles to the west.

Naming it Ryojun, Japan held the port from 1904 until the close of World War II when terms of the Yalta agreement placed it under Russian control. Now, with Soviet withdrawal in favor of China, the wheel of Far Eastern power politics comes full circle.

In leaving the port, the Russians do not abandon the area. Rumor says they have turned Dairen, 20 miles north, into a formidable submarine base, with pens strong enough to withstand atomic attack—and Russia plans to stay in Dairen.

Through the years strategy, not commerce, has been Port Arthur's role. Manchuria's exports—soybeans, millet, sorghum from the river plains, open-pit coal from Fushun, pig iron from Anshan smelters, Korean pine from eastern mountain slopes—have largely bypassed the port. The city's 50,000 people—mostly Chinese—work few industries compared to Mukden (Shenyan), Harbin (Pinkiang), and Changchun, thriving commercial cities to the north. But the grim fortress city has one thing that others do not—the best bathing beach in all Manchuria.

References—Port Arthur is shown on the Society's map of the China Coast and Korea. Write the Society's headquarters, Washington 6, D. C., for a map price list. "In Manchuria Now," *National Geographic Magazine*, March, 1947; GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, Feb. 5, 1951, "Manchuria Is Asia's 'Cradle of Conflict'." *School and Library discount price for Magazine issues a year old or less, 50¢; through 1946, 65¢. Write for prices of earlier issues.*

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carded for mere clothes" in this third national capital on the Danube (no other river has as many).

Wheatfields and vineyards pattern the land to the rugged border with Romania. Where the Transylvanian Alps meet the Serbian mountains, the river cuts the Kazan Defile. Downstream over rocks and reefs it surges between towering walls of the Iron Gate. On it winds through a maze of small swampy islands. At the delta fishermen of Vâlcov trap sturgeon in shallow inlets. The roe is marketed as caviar, a favorite food in Russia.

Wars and invasions of 2,000 years, with a few peaceful lulls, have given the Danube basin a mixed population. Roman Legions were the first civilized settlers. Ruins of walls and fortifications are relics of their occupation. Regensburg was Castra Regina to the Legions.

For five centuries after Rome fell, invading barbarians destroyed the valley's peace. Attila's Huns settled there; nomad Magyars poured in from the grassy plains to the east. Turks came, then the Mongols of Genghis Khan, then more Turks. Later centuries brought colonists from France, Germany, and Poland. The resulting population is a mixture which treaty-making powers cannot sort out amicably.

For 1,000 years nations on the Danube have risen, disappeared, and risen again with a speed hard to equal anywhere else in the world. Austria, whose Hapsburg dynasty ruled the Danube from 1276 to 1918, is today an occupied remnant of a once mighty empire.

Despite wars, changing boundaries, political shackles on commerce, and the fact that the Danube simply flows the wrong way for most trade, it will hold an important place in the mind of man as long as dancers sway to the rhythm of Johann Strauss's Blue Danube Waltz.

References—The Danube is shown on the National Geographic Society's map of Central Europe. "A Tale of Three Cities," *National Geographic Magazine*, Dec., 1945; "Caviar Fishermen of Romania," March, 1940; "Budapest, Twin City of the Danube" and "Hungary, a Kingdom Without a King," June, 1932; "The Danube, Highway of Races," Dec., 1929 (out of print; refer to your library); and articles listed under various Danube-basin countries in the *National Geographic Magazine Cumulative Index*.

The Curving Danube Tells a Tale of Two Cities—In prewar days six bridges linked Hungary's double capital—old Buda (left) and commercial Pest on the far shore.

Now returned to Washington, D. C., the Wells family learns that the pet they sadly left in southeast Asia has happily turned up at the Zoological Park of the Smithsonian Institution. They immediately call to break bread. Roberta throws her host a kiss, then combs its hair. Bimbo jumps to the chair, invites the guests to be seated, and everything is like old times. Roberta's mother remembers waffles and the children don't forget chocolate candy—Bimbo's favorites.

Having old friends in Washington makes Bimbo indeed an ape of distinction. Zoo-keepers said there was no doubt that it recognized the Wellses. For the full story of this strange reunion, see "The Ape with Friends in Washington" in the July, 1953, *National Geographic Magazine*.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHERS
VOLKMAR WENTZEL AND DONALD McBAIN

The Gibbon Who Came to Dinner—Displaying a pout of Ubangi proportions, Bimbo scolds 18-year-old Roberta Wells. "Don't ever leave me again," the monkeylike animal says, and clamps an affectionate headlock on Kenneth, Roberta's brother. Both children became pals of the friendly gibbon when it followed them to school one day in far-off Thailand and was made a member of the household.

Now returned to Washing-

ROBERT E. KUNTZ

New Red Sea Port to Open Yemen Trade Portals

"Taa-la-hon!" (Make it snappy!) cries the Yemeni foreman, gesturing wildly.

Briefly dressed Somali longshoremen, sweltering under the Red Sea sun, pay little heed as they wade onto the sandy beach at Hodeida in Yemen. Dropping their bales of cotton, they shoulder bags of Mocha coffee, dates, and bales of kidskins. Then they splash back chest-deep in water to waiting dhows. These sharp-prowed little sailing craft shuttle to and from the freighter anchored several miles out to sea.

Soon this timeless picture will change. With the help of United Nations port expert Captain Hans Hansen, Arabia's southwestern kingdom plans a modern port for seagoing ships along its scorched 300-mile Red Sea coast. The two-year $45,000,000 project will build breakwaters, docks, warehouses, and dredge a channel at Ras el Katib, a natural harbor 15 miles north of Hodeida.

Ras el Katib should quickly outstrip the meager tonnage handled by Hodeida, and by ancient Mocha to the south, moldering port that in greater days gave its name to Yemen's choice coffee. No longer need most of Yemen's foreign trade trickle through British Aden to the south, or the east African ports of Massaua, Port Sudan, and Djibouti. And docking ships will further draw aside this Nebraska-sized country's traditional veil of isolation.

Invasion by Egyptian, Roman, and Arab taught Yemenis to mistrust the foreigner. Centuries of harsh Turkish rule, and more recent clashes

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long, live most of the 4,500,000 Yemenis. These Arabic highlanders scorn the burning coastal region. They prefer their flowing robes to the short skirts of the dark-skinned lowlanders. Their cushioned and carpeted masonry houses in cool, walled highland towns are a far cry from the grass huts crowding Hodeida's outskirts. Wearing tightly wound turbans, they laugh at the fezlike straw hat of the coastal people.

Every Yemeni worth his salt wears a sharp, curved dagger fashioned of Yemeni steel. While drawing on his narghile, or water pipe, or chewing kat leaves —the nation's favorite stimulant—he dreams of owning a high-spirited Arab stallion, a sign of wealth.

San'a, Yemen's leading city, with more than 50,000 inhabitants, is reached in ten days by camel caravan following precipitous mountain trails from the coast at Hodeida. Laboring trucks with boiling radiators make the 175-mile climb in two days.

Above the city's great walls, the gleaming domes and slender minarets of mosques add Islamic grace to stolid buildings bringing to mind apartment houses of the Western world.

In the *sukh*, or market place, black-robed women weave about with silver bracelets tinkling at wrist and ankle. They barter and sell roasted locusts, fruit, vegetables, and cakes of animal dung for burning. Gay crowds of children gather around the foreigner.

In the country under royal auspices, the Westerner is entertained lavishly. Ushered into fairy-tale dwellings, he sits cross-legged on low cushions lining the walls. Before him are spread steaming spiced dishes of chicken, tender gazelle or rabbit meat, and rice. Without utensils he chases food around the common dish with pieces of unleavened bread. Egg dishes, then fruit, and finally Mocha coffee round out the feast.

Although San'a is the official capital, the present Imam prefers the walled city of Ta'izz nestled among mountains to the south. With the temperature a pleasant 70 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit the year round, he goes daily into the countryside, accompanied by troops of cavalry which often put on exciting displays of horsemanship. He holds outdoor court for his subjects, judging their disputes according to the word of the Koran.

The Imam has cautiously opened the door to Westernization. A U. S. medical mission studied his country's health problems. With an eye on rich oil royalties pouring into the coffers of neighboring Saudi Arabia, he has invited Western geologists to sound out mineral riches in his kingdom.

In a land where the king's harem sews uniforms for the royal army, and villagers believe the jeep to be an offspring of the truck, the Imam's new port of Ras el Katib will truly form a gateway from present to past.

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RICHARD SANGER

Gleaming White Minarets Rise in Ancient Ta'izz—Walls climb rocky slopes of 10,000-foot Jabal Sabir to guard this little city, seat of the Imam. Electricity has come to Ta'izz, but otherwise its people follow the life of centuries past.

along the 200-mile Aden border tightened the shell into which the country had crawled. Today no outsider may visit the "forbidden kingdom" unless expressly invited by the Imam, Yemen's temporal and spiritual ruler.

Thus shielded, Yemen presents the spectacle of a country living today as it did in the days when the Queen of Sheba ruled the land. The rare visitor finds no telephones, railways, postal service, hospitals, banks, paved roads. He shops in crowded bazaars with heavy silver Maria Theresa dollars of 18th-century Austrian vintage.

Through the new port will come mechanical equipment to reinforce and supplement the few crumbling dams remaining of the world's oldest surviving irrigation system. Once known as "Arabia Felix," or happy Arabia, Yemen—unlike her parched neighbors—is blessed with abundant summer rainfall.

Mountains that crumple the land from north to south coax moisture from monsoon winds. Among peaks soaring as high as 12,000 feet nestle curved stone dams and great stone cisterns for storing rain water. As needed, this water trickles onto terraced plateaus, turning fertile land into an immense garden. In cool mountain valleys the famous Judas tree of the Bible spreads its branches. Vineyards and fruit orchards thrive. Goats, sheep, and humped zebu cattle graze themselves fat. Following mule, donkey, or cow, farmers plow land that provided delicacies for the table of Solomon. They have rotated their crops for centuries.

In this mountain-girt heartland, 7,000 to 10,000 feet high and 100 miles

References—Yemen is shown on the Society's map of Southwest Asia. "Yemen Opens the Door to Progress," *National Geographic Magazine*, Feb., 1952; "Yemen—Southern Arabia's Mountain Wonderland," Nov., 1947; GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, Feb. 25, 1952, "Manners and Customs Change Slowly in Yemen."

San'a, Yemen's "Skyscraper Capital"—Curiosity draws a crowd toward the photographer in canyon-walled San'a streets. Men wear turbans and robes, women cover faces with colored shawls. This ancient city of the Queen of Sheba's realm boasted modern-looking apartment houses when wigwams graced New York's Manhattan Island. A graceful minaret rises in the background above one of San'a's many mosques.

HARRY HOOGSTRAAL

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